



Bug Exploration

Our natural playgrounds, or second classroom, provide many opportunities for the children to learn about the world around them. One of their favorite activities on the playground is searching for bugs. We've found rollie pollies, worms, cicada shells, ants, spiders, caterpillars, and so much more. When we find these small critters, it ignites a natural curiosity in even our youngest learners. As adults, we may have fears of our own when it comes to different bugs. If we are not careful we can pass our fears or dislike of bugs on to the children in our care, causing them to be afraid or dislike bugs as well. It is important to remain calm and talk matter-of-factly about the bugs the children are observing without passing on our fear. This can be done by refraining from screaming or running from them but rather remaining calm and observing a difference. Instead of telling a child, we think a bug is gross we can discuss facts about it such as how many legs it has or what it does in nature. What about when a child tries to hand you a bug that you don't want to hold? You can always tell them you would like to observe them from inside a cup or bowl or observe them in their natural habitat. We can also teach children how to interact with bugs. This can look like observing but not squishing them or learning to identify harmful and harmless bugs. It is also important to talk to children about the importance of bugs such as pollinators or how spiders eat other bugs that get caught in their webs.

What can children learn from observing bugs on our playgrounds?

- how things in nature work together- The importance of pollinators and other bugs to our ecosystem.
- counting- How many legs does it have? How many wings? Can you count the spots on the ladybug?
- classification- What is the same about these bugs? What is different?
- science- How does it move? Why does it make a web? Why do rollie pollies roll up into balls?

